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ABSTRACT

A regular classroom teacher describes a mainstreaming program for handicapped children within an open space and team teaching situation. Described are ways that placement procedures, the use of learning centers, and teacher attitudes can facilitate successful mainstreaming. Examples are given of methods of monitoring student progress and of flexible groupings within the large group. (DB)

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MAINSTREAMING FROM PLAN TO PROGRAM:
FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER

Marguite Battaglia

My situation is one of three teachers and 72 children working in an educational complex or cluster, that includes an open space as well as smaller self-contained rooms. The latter is used for small group teacher-directed activities. The learning centers; social studies, science, and communications, are housed in the open space. One teacher supervises the children on task in the "centers" while the other two teachers are teaching reading in the self-contained quiet areas.

I will go on to explain how placement procedures, learning centers, and teacher attitude facilitate successful mainstreaming.

As an important element for mainstreaming, proper placement of the child is crucial. Within our total school program, the mainstream coordinator considers various placement factors. Within the team teaching, learning center based classroom placement factors are also considered. They are as follows:

1. Pairing teaching styles to the student's learning styles. Identifying teachers with a positive attitude towards working with a handicapped child. "Dumping" or forcing mainstreaming make it unfair and difficult for both teacher and student.

2. Pairing student to classroom program. What is the degree of "openness" the child can deal best with? What is the amount of teacher-directed activity? Are flexible classroom groupings and self-contained smaller areas available?

3. Pairing of student and classmates is another placement factor. The mainstreamed student ought to be appropriately placed in terms of chronological age, size and interest level.

The mainstream coordinator of our school has spoken more in depth about her placement procedures at the prelude of this presentation.

The learning center based classroom in which I am involved can be described as follows. Students are given small group, direct instruction on how to work in learning centers. This orientation prepares them for a suc-

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cessful independent learning experience. Students become familiar with the objectives of each task and practice reading charts, diagrams or visuals that will give them information with which to solve problems. They review directions or procedures to follow. Rules for playing teacher-made games and practice in playing them are also gone over during orientation.

Weekly direct-instruction periods (sessions) maintain, remediate or continue to orientate the students to the on-going behavioral objects of each learning center activity.

Reading levels determine the nature of each learning center task. Teacher-made or commercially-made and often teacher-adopted games, filmstrips, movies, charts and other visual activities present material (concepts) to the students. Immediate reinforcement is given to the student responses by the self-correcting styles of the activity.

Each learning center task or activity corresponds to a behavioral objective. The objectives are determined by three things; the school curriculum, the needs of the child and/or the child's interests--diagnostic prescriptive teaching is implemented when available.

A progress report listing the behavioral objectives for each learning center activity and the students' level of accomplishment is sent to the parents on the average of 5 times a year.

The following is an example of a learning center objective, activity, and accompanying progress report statement.

I Communications Learning Center objective: Use of commas in writing a friendly letter.

II Implementation of objective

A. Student will read chart which illustrates a friendly letter. Attention will be drawn to the use of commas in the letter.

B. Students will play a game in which they roll die, move spaces and answer question cards that relate directly to information

on the gameboard. Answers to questions can be found on the gameboard, a chart and on the back of the question card. This affords immediate reinforcement for responses.

C. Students will hand in for assessment, a short written activity that repeats and drills the objective.

III Record Keeping

A. Student: As the student satisfactorily completes an objective (task), it is checked off a list of expectancies for that child. The accomplishments (completed assignments) are posted as a record keeping device for the child.

B. Teacher: Teachers record the satisfactory completion of objectives, the need for improvement, and outstanding completion in their own record-keeping books. Students may individually note their own progress, as opposed to the posted checklist of completed objectives available for all to pursue. In some cases, teacher-made tests are given.

C. Parent: Progress reports are sent home after the learning center unit is completed. The objectives are stated behaviorally. They are listed and checked according to the ability of the student.

The following is an example of two different reading reports. The number and nature of the objective depends on the ability of the student.

S = Satisfactory for reading level

N = Needs improvement

E = Excellent

The amount and degree of effort and energy and interest exerted by the student is stated in the comment section.

Reading Materials: Signposts by the Houghton-Mifflin Co. Reading level 1^2
Vowel Sounds by Marcia Weinstein

Your Child _____.

1. Is able to figure out new words by using

   a) Vowel rules _____

   b) Context clues _____

   c) Syllables _____

   d) Rhyming words _____

2. Is able to read silently with understanding _____

3. Is able to read orally with expression _____

COMMENTS:

Reading Materials: Better Than Gold - MacMillan Co. Reading level 3^1
This group began the 32 Houghton-Mifflin reader, Fiesta, on Feb. 21, 1977.

Your Child _____.

1. Is able to figure out new words independently (without teacher direction. _____

2. Is able to understand the main idea _____

3. Is able to recall details _____

4. Is able to draw conclusions from what is read _____

5. Is able to follow directions _____

6. Is able to read orally with expression _____

COMMENTS:

Understanding this classroom structure, the mainstream coordinator places a student whose learning style is compatible with it, into such a situation.

Additional considerations include the availability of flexible groupings. This learning center based classroom affords us the availability of 9 reading groups (first to fifth graders). There are three math groups allowing for regrouping within them. Regrouping often occurs because of the pre-service college students who participate in the open classroom. There are 3 teacher-directed instructional groups: these consist of average students, those who are above average, and those students who are not yet independent enough to work successfully in the learning centers without much teacher-direction. Their reading level is at least 6 mo. to a year below grade level.

The aforementioned groups are intra-cluster groupings. The following learning situations are available to students through the total school program. They are taught by support service professionals. In addition to offering the students a variety of experiences to meet their needs, or individualize their program, they create an atmosphere of goings-on that does not accent or make notice of the mainstreamed student entering in and out of the classroom for support services. I find this open atmosphere of students coming and going for various reasons a plus for mainstreaming.

Goings-On or Reasons to leave the cluster.

1. Problem solving groups (for underachievers)
2. Home Economics
3. Speech and Language Development
4. Resource Room
5. Reading Center
6. Media Center
7. Mainstreaming tutoring

8. The Magic Circle (self-concept development)
9. Language Arts Enrichment Activities
10. Library/Research Experiences

Teacher attitude and philosophy towards the mainstream student is significant to consider for a program to be successfully implemented.

My teaching skill is enhanced by the team of teachers I work with. The team attitude is one of acceptance of a student for his or her strengths and his or her weaknesses. One child is not labeled because of a difference. We do not consider the mainstreamed students to be in a special category.

We look at each child in terms of where he or she is academically, socially and emotionally. This entering behavior is recorded weekly, monthly and yearly. Goals are clearly stated for the mainstreamed child. Similar goal setting is also stated for each student.

A teacher attitude emphasizing a student's strengths and individualizing instruction to minimize his weaknesses is one that prevails in our classroom. It is a positive way of bringing the educable retarded child into the classroom.

Our open classroom or learning center based classroom, as I have referred to it, emphasizes student involvement and interaction. In this environment, children can be found learning, questioning, sharing--side-by-side with joy and motivation.

Transpariencies Used to Guide the Audience during the Presentation.

Placement---an important element for successful mainstreaming

1. Student and Teacher compatabilities
   - pairing teaching styles to learning styles
   - teacher attitude (philosophy) and student needs
2. Student and classroom program
   - degree of "openness"
   - availability of self-contained area
   - amount of teacher-directed activities
   - availability of flexible academic groups
3. Student and classmates
   - appropriate age, size, and interest level

Overview of Cluster Program

A. 72 children - grades 3-4
   - mainstreamed educable retarded
   - 6 learning disabled
   - 1 emotionally disabled
B. 3 Teachers
C. A large open space and 3 small rooms for teacher directed activity
D. 9 Reading Groups (1^2 - 5^1)
E. 3 Direct Instruction Groups for Social Studies, Science, and Communications
F. 3 Math Groups
   - Basic number skills group
   - Average 3^2 Group
   - Above average 4^1 group
G. 4 Curriculum Extension groups
   - Art, Music, Gym, Swimming

Learning Center Objectives

1. Based on a developmental sequence of skills suggested in our schools curriculum guides
2. Based on the specific needs and interests of the students
3. Become the basis of the Progress Reports

   ie. Learning activity is set up for us of commas in a friendly letter

   Children play game in which they learn to use the comma

   Immediate reinforcement is given for correct responses

   Written task is completed by student to reinforce concept and for teacher assessment

Progress Report:

Your child is able to use commas appropriately when writing a friendly letter. _____ (Sor N)

Learning Centers Afford Opportunities for:

1. Student decision making
2. Peer interaction and peer tutoring
3. Student's budgeting of time and responsibilities
4. Reading Experiences
5. Following Directions
6. Self-learning of new material (for some children)
7. Reinforcement and drill
8. Self-direction
9. Independence
10. Successful experiences for building self-concept

Goings-On (Reasons to leave cluster)

1. Problem solving groups (under achievers)
2. Home Economics
3. Speech and Language development
4. Resource Room
5. Reading Center
6. Media Center
7. Mainstreaming tutoring
8. Magic Circle (self-concept development)
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10. Library/Research Experiences

Model of a Student's Daily Schedule

8:45 - 9:00	T. C. B. (Taking Care of Business)
9:00 - 10:00	Reading: 6-10 children in self-contained quiet environment teacher directed Houghton-Mifflin Basal Series
10:00 - 11:00	Independent work in learning centers or remedial support services
11:00 - 12:00	Art - Music - Gym - Swimming (heterogenous groups)
12:30 - 1:00	Learning Centers or Support Services
1:00 - 1:50	Math (3 groups)
1:50 - 2:30	Direct Instruction for Soc. Studies, Science and Communications (3 groups) Remediation of Learning Center difficulties Orientation to New Learning Center Activities